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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

FRIDAY, May 26, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Utensils for Preserving and Jelly Making." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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In our recent talks we've discussed several times the proper equipment for home canning. Now several listeners have written to ask about the right utensils for preserving and jelly-making. A good question. Whether you're canning or preserving, sewing or cleaning, or doing any other household job, the right tools mean easier and better results.

Let's consider first the articles you need in your kitchen if you are going to make preserves, jams, jellies, marmalades, conserves or any of the other sweet fruit spreads that belong in this class. Starting at the beginning of the process, let's list the utensils you'll need at each step.

First, you'll want an ample dishpan to wash your fruit in. Then, you'll want a sharp, stainless-steel paring knife and a large shallow pan for waste parings. Next, a quart cup for measuring and scales for weighing. Good results are more certain if you weigh the fruit and the sugar instead of measuring them.

For cooking the preserves, you'll want an asbestos mat to prevent scorching on the bottom of the kettle. As for the kettle, that may be either of aluminum or heavy enamelware. You need good quality enamelware with a strong surface that won't chip off. How large should the kettle be? Large enough to hold eight or ten quarts at least. A wide shallow kettle gives a greater surface of the mixture while it is cooking and thus allows for the rapid evaporation necessary in making preserves. Next, you'll want a long-handled spoon or ladle. As the ladle will get hot if left in the kettle, you'll find it handy to have a tray or pan of some sort right near the stove to lay the ladle in. Many people like a big wooden spoon for preserving. Wood has the advantage of not getting hot and of not scratching the kettle. But it does discolor badly.

Now the jars. Whether you choose quart, pint or half-pint jars will depend on your own needs. The size of the family will be one guide. The amount of the preserves you want to keep on hand will be another. And so on. You'll want a pan to sterilize your jars, tongs to lift them when they're hot, and a tray to set them on while you are filling them. A funnel is also very handy in filling. Did I mention jar rubbers? I certainly meant to. As I've often said before, jar rubbers must be new every year. Old used ones just won't seal your jars safely. Be sure even the new rubbers are of good quality rubber to make a perfect seal. Stretch them before using to be sure they have plenty of elasticity. And, of course, wash them off before using. Rubbers with lips are most convenient when the time comes to open the jars.

Finally, you'll need a supply of good clean cloths and holders. And you'll want some form of neat label for your jars.

There. That is the list of equipment for making preserves. If you are making jelly, you'll need a few things more. For one thing, you'll need a smaller kettle for cooking your jelly. The specialists say you have the best results with fruit jelly if you cook no more than six or eight glasses at a time. Then, beside your quart measure, you'll need two measuring cups, one for dry materials and one for liquids. Also, you'll need a large spoon to skim off the jelly and a bowl to hold the skimmings.

Next you'll need a bag to strain the juice from the pulp, and you'll need some kind of a rack or other device for suspending the bag of dripping fruit pulp well above the bowl of juice. You can buy, nowadays, in the stores, a jelly bag and a metal ring standard for holding it. Or you can make the bag and buy the standard. A circle of cotton flannel with a firmly stitched hem slips over the ring standard; the weight of the fruit holds it cup-shaped. ----- If you are feeling too thrifty even to buy the ring standard, you can do as a friend of mine (who, by the way, makes perfectly grand jelly) -- she takes a smooth stick, usually a piece of broom handle and lays it across the space between two chairs or tables of the same height. Then she puts her fruit pulp in a medium-sized sugar sack, gathers the open top together, ties it firmly with a strong cord suspends it by the string from the broom handle over the bowl.

Sometimes jelly bags are made with pointed ends. These are difficult to clean, the dripping process is not so even, and the point is likely to dip into the jelly.

Then, of course, you'll need jelly glasses. The low wide jelly glasses allow the product to jell more quickly and evenly than the tall thin glasses. Also you can turn out a perfect mould from them more easily. Keep a teaspoon handy when you're filling the glasses, to remove any bits of scum from the surface of the jelly after pouring it in the glass. Finally, you'll need for jelly making some paraffin to seal your glasses and a small saucepan to melt it in.

So much for the equipment for the home jelly maker. Just one more item to add to your list--reliable directions. Good recipes are quite as necessary as the right equipment. The day is past when any wise housewife does her cooking or her canning by guess. She follows the advice of specialists who have studied the process scientifically. Your state college as well as the Bureau of Home Economics at Washington, D. C. have information to give you on preserving, jelly making or any other methods of preserving food.

Now let's plan a Sunday dinner. Veal makes a nice roast for this time of year. Because of its size a veal roast is especially suitable for a small family. You can choose a veal shoulder, or a loin or a leg for roasting. Veal roast, then, served with browned potatoes; New Peas; Tomato and cucumber salad on lettuce with French dressing; Strawberry shortcake and coffee.

